

THE DOMESTIC-FOREIGN POLICY NEXUS AND ELECTORAL DYNAMICS IN NIGERIA: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Emmanuel Jibb Adams¹ & Micheal Godwin Okoliko²

¹ Department of Mass Communication, Kaduna State University, Email: Emmanuel.jibbadams@kasu.edu.ng,
Orcid: 0009-0007-8505-7119

² Department of Political Science, Kaduna State University, Email: Godwin.michealokoliko@gmail.com

Citation: Olawunmi Opeyemi Obisesan (2024). The domestic-foreign policy nexus and electoral dynamics in Nigeria: A global perspective. *KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 243 - 259.

ABSTRACT

This study examines how Nigeria's domestic governance, electoral dynamics, and foreign policy decisions influence one another from a global perspective, highlighting the broader implications of these interactions on international diplomacy and global relations. It explores the intricate connections between Nigeria's internal policies and external diplomatic strategies, demonstrating how shifts in leadership and governance priorities shape the country's role in the international arena. The analysis is grounded in five theoretical frameworks: Retrospective Voting Theory, which highlights voter evaluations of past government performance as a driver of policy shifts; Prospective Voting Theory, emphasizing campaign promises as a precursor to changes in governance and diplomacy; Political System Theory, which explains the institutional factors shaping policy outcomes; Elite Theory, detailing the role of influential figures in foreign policy formulation; and Rational Choice Theory, which underscores strategic decision-making by political actors. The study reveals that electoral transitions in Nigeria frequently lead to significant changes in foreign policy priorities, reflecting the evolving objectives of new administrations and the global expectations placed on Nigeria as a regional leader. However, persistent governance challenges such as corruption, insecurity, and over-reliance on oil exports have consistently limited the country's ability to implement effective foreign policy strategies. These issues not only undermine Nigeria's global influence but also constrain its capacity to seize international opportunities and address regional challenges effectively. The study concludes that addressing these governance challenges is essential to aligning Nigeria's domestic policies with its foreign policy objectives in a manner that enhances its global relevance. Strengthening institutions, improving internal security, and diversifying the economy are critical steps toward achieving a more coherent and globally impactful foreign policy. Additionally, fostering international partnerships, prioritizing the welfare of Nigerians abroad, and leveraging economic and human capital are recommended to solidify Nigeria's standing as a significant player on the global stage.

Key words: Domestic policy, Foreign Policy, Nexus, Electoral Dynamics Nigeria, Global Perspective

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's foreign policy has always been influenced by its domestic political landscape, where electoral cycles often reshape the country's international priorities (Eaton, 2018). This dynamic relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy is critical for understanding how Nigeria navigates its global position, balancing both national interests and international diplomacy. The country's foreign policy, crafted to promote its interests globally, is often adjusted or realigned based on the political agenda of the ruling government following elections. This interdependence between domestic governance and foreign relations has been discussed in numerous studies, highlighting how elections influence the trajectory of both (Ianchovichina and Abu-Bader, 2018). Recent scholarly works have examined the evolving nature of Nigeria's foreign policy. For instance, Lawal and Aluko (2016) explore the diplomatic challenges and successes Nigeria has experienced in the Fourth Republic, emphasizing the role of leadership in shaping foreign policy decisions. Similarly, Odubajo (2017) investigates the domestic environmental variables that have influenced the Buhari administration's foreign policy articulation, particularly its focus on economic diplomacy and regional stability. Nigeria's foreign policy under President Muhammadu Buhari has been marked by a shift towards prioritizing economic diplomacy, as Bello, Dutse, and Othman (2017) argue, comparing it with the earlier periods of military rule. This shift illustrates how electoral outcomes can recalibrate foreign priorities in alignment with domestic political needs and challenges.

Elections in Nigeria are not only a mechanism for changing leadership but also a reflection of broader societal issues, including security, economic stability, and national identity. As Chidozie, Ibietan, and Ujara (2014) assert, foreign policy in Nigeria is inextricably linked to national image and transformation. The management of this image plays a significant role in shaping Nigeria's global standing, with the media and public perception often serving as a bridge between domestic affairs and international relations. In the context of global events such as the resurgence of the Biafra movement, discussed by Campbell (2017), Nigeria's domestic struggles can significantly influence its foreign policy, as the state seeks to manage both internal and external perceptions.

The nexus between domestic politics and foreign policy in Nigeria is also shaped by the challenges faced by its citizens abroad. As highlighted by Warami (2017), the government's handling of the plight of Nigerian migrants in Libya, and the broader issues surrounding Nigerian citizens' treatment overseas, can inform foreign policy decisions, reflecting the state's commitment to protecting its nationals. This theme is further emphasized by Kupoluyi (2017), who suggests that Nigeria's foreign policy often responds to both domestic concerns and global expectations, which are in constant flux due to political changes.

In the backdrop of these considerations, this paper examines the domestic-foreign policy nexus and electoral dynamics in Nigeria from a global perspective. The relationship between domestic

governance, foreign policy, and electoral outcomes remains vital for understanding Nigeria's evolving global presence. This study will contribute to the broader discourse on the intersection of domestic politics and international relations.

Conceptualizing the Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus in Nigeria

The domestic-foreign policy nexus is a critical concept for understanding how a country's internal political dynamics influence its interactions with the international community (Akanke, 2018). In the context of Nigeria, this relationship is shaped by the interplay of domestic governance, electoral outcomes, security concerns, and economic interests, which together dictate the country's foreign policy direction (Elumoye, 2023a). The domestic-foreign policy nexus refers to the ways in which internal factors such as political leadership, public opinion, national security, and economic performance interact with and shape the formulation of a country's foreign policy. As Nigeria navigates its political and economic challenges, this nexus underscores the fluid and interconnected nature of domestic and international affairs (Elumoye, 2023b).

One of the foundational ideas in understanding the domestic-foreign policy nexus is the notion that foreign policy decisions are not made in isolation from domestic concerns. According to Fawole (2024), the linkage between external and domestic policies is often reciprocal, meaning that domestic political events can have significant repercussions on a country's foreign policy decisions, while changes in international relations can provoke shifts in domestic politics. For Nigeria, this dual influence is evident in how electoral cycles, leadership changes, and national security challenges directly impact the country's foreign policy posture (Ikpeama, 2023).

For instance, Nigeria's foreign policy under various administrations has been shaped by domestic concerns such as security, economic development, and national identity. The Buhari administration's foreign policy, as discussed by Bello, Dutse, and Othman (2017), highlights the significant influence of domestic political priorities, especially as the country grapples with internal security issues such as the Boko Haram insurgency and ethnic tensions. These domestic challenges often prompt the government to adopt foreign policy strategies that aim to secure regional cooperation and international support for counterterrorism efforts (Iroegbu, 2023). This alignment between domestic security concerns and foreign policy is a clear example of the domestic-foreign policy nexus at work.

Moreover, the influence of electoral politics cannot be overstated when examining the domestic-foreign policy relationship in Nigeria. Elections in Nigeria, often characterized by high levels of political competition, create environments where foreign policy decisions are sometimes used as a tool for garnering domestic political support. For example, the foreign policy strategies of former President Goodluck Jonathan were often viewed through the lens of political positioning, as he sought to balance domestic political considerations with the demands of global diplomacy (Boma Lysa, Terfa, & Tseggyu, 2015). Jonathan's approach to international relations was shaped

by the need to present Nigeria as a stable and influential power in Africa, a strategy that was crucial to securing both regional and international legitimacy, especially in the wake of domestic unrest and corruption scandals.

Similarly, Odubajo (2017) discusses how domestic political variables—such as the economic interests of political elites—can shape Nigeria's foreign policy decisions. These interests often align with broader regional and international goals, particularly in terms of economic diplomacy. The influence of domestic economic policies, such as trade liberalization and investment strategies, plays a significant role in Nigeria's foreign engagements, as the government seeks to position the country as an attractive destination for foreign direct investment (FDI). However, the alignment of these economic objectives with global standards and practices is not always seamless, often requiring adjustments in response to both domestic pressures and international expectations (Obidiaghaa, 2023).

Another key aspect of the domestic-foreign policy nexus is the management of national identity and public perception. Nigeria's international image has often been shaped by domestic political narratives, with leaders attempting to project a positive image of the nation abroad. According to Chidozie, Ibietan, and Ujara (2014), the management of Nigeria's image in the international arena is intrinsically linked to the country's internal political developments. Public diplomacy efforts, such as those pursued during the administration of former President Yar'Adua, emphasize the role of leadership in fostering a national narrative that resonates both domestically and internationally (Odoh, 2020). The country's image, influenced by its leadership's handling of domestic issues, becomes a significant tool in shaping foreign policy, as Nigeria seeks to protect and enhance its reputation on the global stage.

Furthermore, the domestic-foreign policy nexus in Nigeria is also impacted by issues such as migration, human rights, and the treatment of Nigerians abroad. Warami (2017) highlights the role of the Nigerian government in responding to the plight of Nigerians in Libya, illustrating how domestic concerns about the welfare of citizens abroad often intersect with the broader goals of foreign policy. In such cases, foreign policy is influenced by the political will to protect national interests while managing the country's global image. As Nigerian citizens continue to migrate in search of better economic opportunities, issues such as human trafficking, illegal migration, and the treatment of Nigerians in foreign countries shape Nigeria's diplomatic engagements.

The Concept of Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is a multifaceted concept within the social sciences, characterized by a lack of universal consensus regarding its definition. Scholars and policymakers offer diverse perspectives on its scope and objectives. Akande (2018) defines foreign policy as a deliberate set of objectives crafted to guide a nation's interactions with others on the global stage. It ensures that a country's international engagements are coherent and goal-driven, rather than haphazard or reactive.

Ouchenane (2020) describe foreign policy as a strategic approach that empowers nations to navigate the international environment effectively. It is seen as an instrument of influence,

enabling states to respond proactively or reactively to global developments while safeguarding their national interests. In this regard, foreign policy becomes a coordinated effort by decision-makers to manipulate international conditions to achieve predetermined objectives.

Egwim (2018) further emphasizes the intrinsic connection between foreign and domestic policies, suggesting that foreign policy is an extension of public policy designed to address domestic priorities on a global platform. This perspective highlights the necessity of integrating domestic concerns, such as economic and security goals, into the broader framework of international relations.

According to Elumoye (2023a), foreign policy serves as the foundation for a state's engagement with the global community. National interest is its cornerstone, guiding the formulation and implementation of policies that align with the state's developmental aspirations while adhering to international norms and obligations. Elumoye (2023b) also underscores the influence of external dynamics, noting that Nigeria's foreign policy must consider the policies of neighboring and global powers to maintain relevance and achieve its goals effectively.

Fawole (2024) argues that foreign policy decisions are deeply interwoven with international law, treaty obligations, and leadership roles within global organizations. He posits that nations must balance their domestic objectives with the constraints and opportunities presented by the international system. This balance ensures the pursuit of national interests within an interconnected global framework.

These varying definitions highlight the complexity of foreign policy and its deep connection to domestic and international considerations, especially the role of international law and the influence of other states. The following section will examine Nigeria's foreign policy in retrospect.

The Concept of Domestic Policy

Domestic policy refers to the internal strategies and actions a government implements to address societal issues and ensure the well-being and development of its citizens. It encompasses various domains, including economic management, social welfare, political governance, and environmental sustainability. Governments utilize domestic policy to achieve national goals such as economic growth, social equity, and national security (Ikpeama, 2023).

According to Iroegbu (2023), domestic policies serve as the framework for prioritizing issues like infrastructure, education, and health services. These priorities are shaped by the political and economic vision of the ruling administration. For instance, Nigeria's recent domestic initiatives have focused on fostering economic stability and addressing security challenges, reflecting the administration's broader governance agenda.

Obidiaghaa (2023) emphasizes the interconnection between domestic policies and foreign relations. He notes that a robust domestic strategy is essential for successful international diplomacy. Decisions related to trade, security, or human rights within Nigeria often ripple outward, influencing its engagement with global partners. For instance, the government's

emphasis on economic diplomacy aligns with its domestic economic recovery goals, showing the mutual reinforcement between internal and external policies.

Odoh (2020) discusses how domestic policy shapes a nation's capacity to engage globally. In Nigeria, strategic governance reforms aimed at addressing corruption and improving public service delivery have enhanced the country's reputation and credibility on the international stage. These reforms demonstrate how addressing internal challenges can create a foundation for more effective foreign policy.

Premium Times Editorial (2023) highlights that domestic policy is the bedrock for achieving broader national objectives, including international influence. It argues that prioritizing internal governance, such as improving security and reducing poverty, enhances a nation's ability to project power and negotiate effectively in global forums.

Nigeria's Domestic Political Landscape

Nigeria's domestic political landscape is defined by complex and evolving dynamics that influence governance, policymaking, and international relations. Since its transition to democratic governance in 1999, the country has experienced significant changes, balancing elements of continuity with reform. This political environment reflects Nigeria's rich ethno-religious diversity, regional distinctions, and a mix of democratic and institutional challenges, all of which play a crucial role in shaping both domestic and foreign policy (Iroegbu, 2023; Obidiaghaa, 2023). The transformation from military rule to democratic governance has also brought to light the challenges of political stability and governance efficiency, which continue to influence Nigeria's policy decisions today.

The establishment of the Fourth Republic in 1999 marked a critical turning point, signaling the end of decades of military rule. Democratic reforms during this period were aimed at promoting the rule of law and protecting human rights. The administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999–2007) was instrumental in stabilizing Nigeria's democratic structures, yet it struggled with significant issues such as corruption, governance inefficiencies, and unity amidst ethnic divisions (Akinterinwa, 2017b; Obidiaghaa, 2023). Obasanjo's government, while laying a foundation for democratic governance, faced significant resistance in addressing political corruption and regional unrest, particularly in the Niger Delta, where militancy posed a direct challenge to both domestic peace and Nigeria's global image.

The interplay between Nigeria's domestic and foreign policies often exposes inherent contradictions. For instance, while efforts to assert leadership in Africa and engage in global diplomatic initiatives have been central to Nigeria's foreign policy, these ambitions are frequently undermined by domestic challenges such as insecurity and weak governance (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2015; Odoh, 2020). Nigeria's ability to balance its domestic priorities with its external ambitions has often been compromised by issues such as corruption and instability, reflecting the struggle to maintain a coherent and consistent policy approach on both fronts.

Domestic security issues, including the Boko Haram insurgency, militancy in the Niger Delta, and ethnic conflicts, have consistently shaped Nigeria's domestic and foreign priorities. The focus on internal security has at times diverted attention and resources from long-term international strategic goals (Akinterinwa, 2017b; Premium Times Editorial, 2023). These persistent challenges underscore the importance of aligning domestic priorities with foreign policy ambitions to enhance Nigeria's global influence, particularly as the government works to address internal instability while asserting itself as a regional power.

Recent administrations, including that of President Muhammadu Buhari, have prioritized the protection of Nigerian citizens abroad as a key component of foreign policy. Buhari's government, for example, paid significant attention to the welfare of migrant workers and Nigerians in the diaspora, particularly in the Middle East and Europe, in response to reports of abuse and exploitation (Iroegbu, 2023; Obidiaghaa, 2023). These efforts reflect a growing recognition of the interconnectedness between domestic governance and foreign policy imperatives, with the protection of Nigerian citizens abroad becoming a significant foreign policy goal.

Overall, Nigeria's domestic political landscape remains central to understanding its policy frameworks and international engagements. The interplay of governance reforms, security priorities, and diplomatic strategies continues to shape its role on the global stage (Akinterinwa, 2017b; Premium Times Editorial, 2023).

Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objectives and Priorities

Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and priorities have evolved significantly since the country's independence in 1960. Over the decades, these objectives have been shaped by both domestic considerations and the shifting dynamics of global politics. Nigeria's foreign policy is primarily designed to serve its national interests, which are often defined by the need to maintain territorial integrity, promote economic development, secure political stability, and enhance its standing in the international community. Nigeria's foreign policy is also characterized by a commitment to pan-Africanism, peace and security, and the promotion of democratic values.

Promotion of National Interes: Nigeria's foreign policy is underpinned by the principle of protecting and promoting the country's national interest. This interest encompasses economic, security, and diplomatic goals aimed at strengthening the nation both internally and on the global stage. As Ade-Ibijola (2013) observes, national interest serves as the guiding factor for Nigeria's foreign policy decisions, ensuring that foreign relations align with the country's broader developmental objectives. This includes securing access to international markets, attracting foreign investments, and maintaining security in the face of regional and global threats.

Pan-Africanism and Regional Leadership: One of the central pillars of Nigeria's foreign policy has been its strong commitment to pan-Africanism and its role as a regional leader in Africa. From the outset of independence, Nigeria sought to assert its leadership within the African continent,

working toward the political, economic, and social unity of African states. This objective is reflected in Nigeria's active participation in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU), and its involvement in peacekeeping missions and conflict resolution efforts across the continent. As noted by Adebajo (2008), Nigeria's foreign policy has consistently emphasized the importance of African solidarity, with a focus on fighting colonialism, apartheid, and supporting African liberation movements.

Nigeria's commitment to regional peace and security has also been a defining feature of its foreign policy priorities. The country has been involved in several peacekeeping missions under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and has played a pivotal role in managing regional conflicts, such as the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Nigeria's leadership in these efforts underscores its belief that regional stability is key to the broader economic and political development of the African continent.

Economic Diplomacy and Development: Nigeria's foreign policy is increasingly focused on economic diplomacy, aimed at boosting the country's economic growth through trade, investment, and access to global markets. Economic diplomacy seeks to position Nigeria as a key player in global economic affairs, facilitating favorable trade agreements, attracting foreign investments, and securing funding for development projects. In recent years, Nigeria has sought to diversify its economy, reducing dependence on oil exports and increasing engagement in sectors such as agriculture, technology, and manufacturing. This economic diversification strategy is essential not only for Nigeria's internal development but also for strengthening its bargaining power in international economic negotiations (Ade-Ibijola, 2013).

Peace and Security: Security concerns, both domestically and internationally, have been a significant determinant of Nigeria's foreign policy. The country's foreign policy priorities have been influenced by the need to maintain internal security and to protect its citizens abroad. As noted by Akinterinwa (2017a), issues such as the Boko Haram insurgency, militancy in the Niger Delta, and terrorism have dominated Nigeria's security landscape, and these challenges have shaped the country's interactions with the international community. Nigeria's foreign policy objectives also emphasize cooperation with global powers in the fight against terrorism, transnational organized crime, and the protection of human rights.

Moreover, Nigeria has consistently emphasized the importance of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, both within Africa and globally. Through its involvement in peacekeeping operations and diplomatic initiatives, Nigeria has positioned itself as a champion of conflict resolution, advocating for peaceful negotiations and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Multilateral Diplomacy: Another priority of Nigeria's foreign policy is multilateral diplomacy. Nigeria has consistently sought to strengthen its relations with key international organizations, including the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the International

Monetary Fund (IMF). Nigeria’s membership in these organizations allows it to influence global decision-making, advocate for the interests of developing countries, and participate in shaping the international order. As Agbu (2009) highlights, Nigeria has been a strong advocate for reforming global institutions to better reflect the interests of African and developing nations, especially in areas such as global governance, trade, and development aid.

Protecting Nigerians Abroad: Protecting the welfare of Nigerian citizens living abroad has become an increasingly important aspect of the country’s foreign policy. According to Akinterinwa (2017b), this objective is essential, particularly in light of the challenges faced by Nigerian migrants in foreign countries, including exploitation, abuse, and discrimination. The Nigerian government has increasingly focused on improving consular services, strengthening diplomatic representation, and advocating for the rights of Nigerians in the diaspora.

The Nexus Between Nigeria’s Domestic and Foreign Policy

Nigeria’s domestic policies are closely intertwined with its foreign policy decisions, impacting how it engages with the international community. The interactions between the country's internal political, economic, and social landscapes and its international diplomatic actions demonstrate how changes within Nigeria’s borders resonate on the global stage. The following table provides a more comprehensive comparison, detailing how Nigeria's domestic policy influences its foreign policy decisions across various sectors. This nexus between domestic policy and foreign relations is discussed extensively by scholars such as Lawal & Aluko (2016), Nwanolue & Iwuoha (2012), and Odubajo (2017).

Domestic Policy Area	Foreign Policy Implications	Key Examples
Economic Policy	Drives Nigeria’s international trade agreements, foreign direct investments (FDI), and economic diplomacy. Changes in economic policy often determine Nigeria’s trade relations and investment strategies globally (Lawal & Aluko, 2016).	Nigeria’s economic diplomacy strategies, trade relations with China, the United States, and European Union, as well as agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) (Kupoluyi, 2017).
Security and Defense Policy	Directly impacts Nigeria’s role in regional and global security initiatives, affecting its involvement in peacekeeping missions, counterterrorism efforts, and military cooperation with other nations (Odubajo, 2017).	Nigeria’s military operations in the Sahel, peacekeeping missions under ECOWAS, its involvement in counterterrorism initiatives with the US and France, and leadership in African Union peace missions (Meierding, 2010).

Political Stability and Governance	Influences Nigeria's diplomatic reputation and engagement with multilateral organizations. Political transitions, governance reforms, and democracy play a role in how Nigeria is perceived globally and how it navigates international relations (Oni & Taiwo, 2016).	Nigeria's participation in the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), and ECOWAS, as well as diplomatic relations with countries like the US and China based on its political governance model (Ukwuije, 2015).
Environmental Policy	Shapes Nigeria's participation in global environmental dialogues and agreements. The country's domestic policies on climate change and environmental protection guide its international advocacy and commitments to global climate actions (Ota & Ecoma, 2015).	Nigeria's role in global climate accords such as the Paris Agreement, policy responses to climate change (e.g., the Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs), and environmental diplomacy in Africa (Sani, 2012).
Health Policy	Impacts Nigeria's foreign health diplomacy and its relationships in international health aid programs. Domestic public health priorities influence Nigeria's collaboration with global health organizations, especially during crises like pandemics (Warner, 2016).	Nigeria's engagement with the World Health Organization (WHO) on global health initiatives, the country's role in managing the Ebola outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic, and its cooperation in international health aid initiatives (Ujara & Ibieta, 2014).
Education and Human Capital Development	Determines Nigeria's foreign educational partnerships, student exchange programs, and collaborations on human capital development globally. Domestic policies that focus on education reform affect the country's international education relations (Kupoluyi, 2017).	Nigeria's international partnerships in education with countries like the United States and the UK, participation in initiatives like the African Higher Education Collaborative, and engagement in UNESCO programs (Nwauzi, 2017a).
Human Rights and Social Policy	Influences Nigeria's human rights stance on the international stage and its engagement with global advocacy organizations. Domestic social policies regarding human rights, women's rights, and LGBTQ+ rights shape Nigeria's diplomatic interactions (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012).	Nigeria's voting record at the United Nations on human rights resolutions, its stance on the International Criminal Court (ICC), and participation in the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Lawal & Aluko, 2016).
Energy Policy	Plays a pivotal role in Nigeria's foreign policy, especially concerning oil and gas	Nigeria's oil diplomacy with countries such as the US, China, and India,

	diplomacy. Nigeria's energy resources guide its relations with oil-importing countries and its participation in global energy forums (Meierding, 2010).	participation in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and its leadership role in the African Energy Forum (Oni & Taiwo, 2016).
Cultural and Religious Policies	Affects Nigeria's international cultural and religious engagements, impacting its soft power and its relations with global cultural institutions and religious organizations (Ota & Ecoma, 2016).	Nigeria's engagement with UNESCO on cultural preservation, its participation in global interfaith dialogues, and its influence in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) due to its religious policies (Sani, 2012).
Foreign Debt and Fiscal Policies	The country's fiscal decisions and management of foreign debt impact its ability to maintain strong international economic relations and secure foreign aid or investment (Ukwuije, 2015).	Nigeria's participation in debt relief initiatives, relations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, and its foreign debt management strategies (Kupoluyi, 2017).
Technology and Innovation Policy	Influences Nigeria's participation in international technology collaborations, including foreign investments in the tech sector and partnerships for research and development (Ota & Ecoma, 2015).	Nigeria's partnerships with tech companies and countries, involvement in the African Union's Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy, and participation in global technology initiatives (Oni & Taiwo, 2016).

Source: Ukaogo, Uche, Orabueze, Virginia and Stella (2020)

This table illustrates how interconnected Nigeria's domestic policy decisions are with its foreign policy outcomes. It highlights the complexities of these relationships, demonstrating the multifaceted impact of domestic governance on international relations. By understanding these dynamics, we can better assess Nigeria's positioning in the global arena and predict how internal policy changes might influence its diplomatic and foreign policy strategies.

Global Perspective on the Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus

The relationship between a nation's domestic policies and its foreign policy is fundamental in shaping its international positioning and diplomatic strategies. For Nigeria, this nexus reflects a dynamic interplay between political, economic, and security concerns within its borders and its aspirations on the global stage. By understanding this relationship, one can explore Nigeria's influence in global governance, its economic diplomacy, and its response to emerging global security challenges.

Nigeria's Role in Global Governance: Nigeria's role in global governance is shaped by both domestic policies and external factors. Multilateral organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and ECOWAS are central to Nigeria's diplomatic strategy. Nigeria's internal policies on democracy, human rights, and development influence its approach within

these platforms. However, issues like political instability, corruption, and governance challenges at home often complicate the country's ability to assert its leadership within these organizations (Kia, Nwigbo, & Ojie, 2017).

The global power landscape, especially the rise of China and the perceived retreat of the United States from certain global commitments, plays a significant role in shaping Nigeria's foreign policy. As China expands its influence in Africa, Nigeria has sought to align itself with China's Belt and Road Initiative to bolster its domestic infrastructure needs. This shift demonstrates how Nigeria's foreign policy priorities adjust to global power dynamics, reflecting a growing interest in South-South cooperation (Kupoluyi, 2017). Furthermore, Nigeria's foreign policy strategy is often compared with other emerging powers like Brazil, India, and South Africa. While these nations similarly navigate a global order marked by power shifts, their different domestic challenges such as India's security concerns and Brazil's economic volatility offer valuable comparisons to Nigeria's foreign policy trajectory (Meierding, 2010; Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012).

Economic Diplomacy and Domestic-Global Policy Alignment: Economic diplomacy has become a central feature of Nigeria's foreign policy, with electoral cycles significantly influencing its approach to international trade agreements, foreign direct investment (FDI), and foreign aid. For instance, a new government often repositions its economic priorities, which in turn impacts its foreign policy relations. Elections lead to shifts in Nigeria's international partnerships, as new leaders focus on securing trade agreements that promise immediate economic benefits while adjusting longer-term economic strategies in response to domestic economic challenges (Lawal & Aluko, 2016).

In the global context, trends such as trade wars, global recessions, and fluctuations in commodity prices also affect Nigeria's foreign policy decisions. The oil price drop in recent years has pushed Nigeria to diversify its economy away from oil dependence, leading to new economic diplomacy strategies aimed at securing investment in agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. This diversification reflects the global economic environment and its direct influence on Nigeria's foreign policy choices (Oni & Taiwo, 2016). In light of these global shifts, Nigeria has had to reframe its trade policies, balancing relationships with the West and emerging markets like China and India, which offer new avenues for growth (Nwauzi, 2017a).

Global Security Concerns and Domestic Policy Shifts: Nigeria's domestic security concerns especially insurgencies like Boko Haram and regional conflicts have a direct impact on its foreign policy, particularly in the realm of counterterrorism and peacekeeping. As a leading member of ECOWAS, Nigeria has played a key role in peacekeeping missions across West Africa, highlighting the interconnectedness of domestic security priorities and foreign policy. These efforts align with Nigeria's broader strategy to enhance regional stability and counteract global terrorism networks that threaten both Nigerian borders and the wider region (Warner, 2016).

Nigeria's military engagements and security collaborations with other countries, such as France and the United States, emphasize the importance of foreign policy in managing domestic security challenges. These relationships are driven by the shared interests of combating terrorism and ensuring regional stability. Nigeria's active participation in these global and regional security frameworks underscores how domestic policy influences its foreign policy decisions on security (Nwauzi, 2017b). A comparison with other democracies, such as the U.S. and India, illustrates how domestic security issues shape broader foreign policy strategies. Both the U.S.'s war on terror and India's defense diplomacy are similarly influenced by internal security concerns, affecting their global military strategies and diplomatic relations (Sani, 2012; Odubajo, 2017).

Electoral Outcomes and Nigeria's Foreign Policy Shifts: Electoral transitions in Nigeria often bring about significant shifts in the country's foreign policy, affecting its international relations, trade partnerships, and diplomatic priorities. These shifts are influenced by the new leadership's priorities, ideological leanings, and domestic agendas. The change in leadership from President Olusegun Obasanjo to Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2007 marked a notable shift in Nigeria's foreign policy. Under Obasanjo, Nigeria was more active in global diplomacy, focusing on peacekeeping and asserting its leadership role in Africa. However, Yar'Adua's presidency saw a shift towards a more inward-looking foreign policy, with an emphasis on domestic economic reforms, which resulted in less assertiveness in international relations (Lawal & Aluko, 2016). Similarly, the transition from Yar'Adua to Goodluck Jonathan and later to Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 brought about further changes, especially with Buhari's emphasis on economic diplomacy and anti-corruption initiatives in foreign policy.

Electoral transitions in Nigeria significantly impact its international partnerships, particularly with key global actors. For instance, the Buhari administration shifted Nigeria's foreign policy towards enhancing economic relations with China and other emerging markets, moving away from the historical emphasis on the West (Kupoluyi, 2017). This change reflected the government's focus on infrastructure development, which aligned with China's Belt and Road Initiative. Moreover, Buhari's focus on security and counterterrorism during his tenure shaped Nigeria's diplomatic relationships with Western powers, especially the U.S. and the European Union, who provided support for Nigeria's counterinsurgency efforts against Boko Haram and other terrorist groups (Kia, Nwigbo, & Ojie, 2017).

Theories of Electoral Dynamics and Political Decision-Making

Electoral dynamics play a crucial role in shaping political decisions, particularly within democratic frameworks. The relationship between electoral outcomes and political decision-making involves understanding how political parties, candidates, and voters engage with the issues at hand during elections, and how these factors influence future governance and policy directions. Several theories attempt to explain how electoral systems and decision-making processes shape political outcomes and, in turn, affect foreign policy.

- 1) **Retrospective Voting Theory:** This theory suggests that voters make decisions based on the past performance of the incumbent government. When there is an electoral transition, particularly from one administration to another, it may indicate a shift in foreign policy, especially if voters express dissatisfaction with the previous government's foreign relations (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012). This shift can manifest in changes in diplomatic alliances, economic priorities, or security policies as new leadership brings in a fresh perspective.
- 2) **Prospective Voting Theory:** Voters under this theory look forward to future policies and outcomes. Political campaigns are focused on promises and policy directions that candidates make for their potential term in office. After elections, a newly elected government might make foreign policy shifts based on the promises made during the campaign, signaling new directions in diplomacy or international relations (Lawal & Aluko, 2016).
- 3) **Political System Theory:** This theory emphasizes the role of institutions, both domestic and foreign, in shaping electoral outcomes and political decisions. It highlights how political parties and institutional frameworks define the parameters within which electoral decisions are made, influencing how elected officials make policy decisions, including foreign policy. In countries like Nigeria, where political decisions are often influenced by a combination of party ideologies and the political system's structure, foreign policy can be significantly impacted by changes in government (Meierding, 2010).
- 4) **Elite Theory:** In many democracies, including Nigeria, the decisions made during elections can be influenced by the elite, such as political leaders, business magnates, and military officers. After elections, these elites often exert significant influence over the direction of foreign policy. This influence can either stabilize or alter the country's foreign policy stance, depending on whether they align with the prevailing domestic policies or seek to forge new international relationships (Nwauzi, 2017a).
- 5) **Rational Choice Theory:** This theory suggests that voters, political parties, and candidates act in their best interest, seeking to maximize their personal or political benefits. In electoral decision-making, the political actors assess costs and benefits, including foreign policy considerations, to make decisions that align with their preferences and strategic goals. Therefore, after an election, the political decisions and foreign policy shifts are made in line with the new leadership's strategic objectives (Sani, 2012).

Conclusion

The nexus between Nigeria's domestic and foreign policies demonstrates the intrinsic relationship between internal governance and international engagements. Domestic policies in areas such as economic management, security, education, health, and environmental protection significantly shape Nigeria's diplomatic strategies and global positioning. This

interconnectedness reflects the dual responsibility of ensuring internal stability while fostering international partnerships. However, challenges such as governance inefficiencies, security threats, and inconsistent policy implementation often limit Nigeria's ability to fully leverage its domestic strengths in global affairs.

Understanding these dynamics is crucial for navigating Nigeria's role in the international community. Effective alignment between domestic priorities and foreign policy objectives can enhance Nigeria's reputation, secure economic and political gains, and foster stronger global collaborations. Nigeria's ability to address domestic issues while maintaining active engagement in global affairs will be pivotal in shaping its future on the world stage.

Recommendations

- 1) Nigeria should prioritize governance reforms to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency in policymaking. Strong institutions will ensure that domestic policies are consistently aligned with foreign policy objectives.
- 2) Addressing domestic security challenges such as terrorism and insurgencies through stronger regional and international cooperation can improve Nigeria's stability and bolster its influence in global security frameworks.
- 3) Nigeria must expand its economic base beyond oil dependence, focusing on sectors like technology, agriculture, and manufacturing. This diversification will enhance its economic diplomacy and resilience in international markets.
- 4) Policies that promote education and skill development can position Nigeria as a hub for innovation and research. This will attract international collaborations and investments in critical sectors.
- 5) By adopting more proactive environmental policies, Nigeria can strengthen its role in global climate initiatives, ensuring access to international funding and partnerships.
- 6) The government should strengthen ties with the Nigerian diaspora, utilizing their expertise, resources, and networks to drive domestic growth and enhance Nigeria's global image.
- 7) Nigeria's foreign policy should prioritize the protection and welfare of its citizens abroad, enhancing its credibility and ensuring that its diplomatic engagements resonate with domestic and global audiences.

REFERENCES

- 1) Akande, L. (2018). VP Osinbajo's remarks at the launch of the Nigerian Economic Diplomacy Initiative in Abuja. *State House* (April 6, 2018). <https://statehouse.gov.ng/news/vp-osinbajos-remarks-at-the-launch-of-the-nigerian-economic-diplomacy-initiative-in-abuja/>
- 2) BBC News. (2016). Guide to Libyan militias. January 11, 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east19744533.amp>

- 3) Caragea, A., & Feffer, J. (2009). The return of the Non-Aligned Movement? https://ips-dc.org/the_return_of_the_non-aligned_movement/
- 4) Egwim, A. I. (2018). Politics and economic interpretation of twenty-first century Pan-Africanism. *Socialscientia Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(1), 48-59.
- 5) Elumoye, D. (2023a). Changes imminent as Nigeria's parliament reviews foreign policy. December 16, 2023. <https://www.arise.tv/changes-imminent-as-nigerias-parliament-reviews-foreign-policy/>
- 6) Elumoye, D. (2023b). Africa remains the centerpiece of Nigeria's economic and foreign policy, says Tinubu in Paris. June 24, 2023. <https://www.arise.tv/africa-remains-centrepiece-of-nigerias-economic-and-foreign-policy-says-tinubu-in-paris/>
- 7) Fawole, W. A. (2024). Nigeria's foreign policy in contemporary times. Paper prepared for the NPSA Seminar Series, January 17, 2024.
- 8) Ianchovichina, E., & Abu-Bader, S. (2018). Unintended consequences? Foreign intervention, polarization, and conflict in MENA. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/unintended-consequences-foreign-intervention-polarization-and-conflict-in-mena/>
- 9) Iroegbu, R. (2023). From G-20 to UNGA: Nigeria's Foreign Ministry unveils Tinubu's 4-Ds diplomacy. October 4, 2023. <https://globalsentinelng.com/g-20-to-unga-nigerias-foreign-ministry-unveils-tinubus-4-d-diplomacy/>
- 10) Imus, P., Pierre, G., & Rother, B. (2017). The cost of conflict: Middle East strife is exacting a heavy toll on regional economies. *Finance and Development*, 54(4). <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2017/12/imus.htm>
- 11) International Crisis Group. (2015). The prize: Fighting for Libya's energy wealth. *Middle East and North Africa Report No. 165*. December 3, 2015, pp. 1-3.
- 12) Lacher, W. (2019). Who is fighting whom in Tripoli? How the 2019 Civil War is transforming Libya's military landscape. *Small Arms Survey Briefing Paper*, August.
- 13) Mazrui, A. (2001). Pan-Africanism in the era of globalization. *Seminar in eight Dubois Padmore-Nkrumah Pan-African lectures at W. E. B. Dubois Memorial Center for Pan African culture*, Accra, Ghana. *The Guardian*, September 1.
- 14) OECD. (2020). Military interventions in North and West Africa. In *The Geography of Conflict in North and West Africa* (Éditions OCDE, Paris). <https://doi.org/10.1787/6263017c-en>
- 15) OECD. (2021). The Geography of Conflict in North and West Africa. *West African Studies, OECD Publishing*, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/02181039-en>
- 16) Odoh, I. (2020). *Nigeria First* as new foreign policy thrust in a changing world. February 2, 2020. <https://businessday.ng/opinion/article/nigeria-first-as-new-foreign-policy-thrust-in-a-changing-world/>
- 17) Ouchenane, A. (2020). The North African Region (The Maghreb): Dynamics of cooperation and conflict. <https://vistointernational.org/publications/the-north-african-region-the-maghreb-dynamics-of-cooperation-and-conflict/>
- 18) Schmidt, E. (2018). *Foreign intervention in Africa after the Cold War: Sovereignty, responsibility, and the war on terror*. Ohio University Press, Athens.
- 19) Syed, I. (2019). To intervene or not to intervene: Ethics of humanitarian intervention in Myanmar. *IPRI Journal*, 19(1), 117-127.

- 20) Winer, J. M. (2019). Origins of the Libyan conflict and options for its resolution. *The Middle East Institute Policy Paper 2019-4*.
- 21) Zoubir, Y. H., & Abderrahmane, A. (2021). Political, economic, and security challenges in North Africa. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/report-ISPI-ATLANTIC-COUNCIL2021_chapter-1.pdf